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(54) **Luggage cases**

(57) A luggage case is provided with one or more flexible handles 22, 23 which can be adjusted to a length most convenient for the user to enable him to tow the case along the ground on four castor wheels 31 and to lift the case if necessary. Each handle may have an adjustable attachment 26 to the case, or its own length may be adjustable.

The case may be a rigid, collapsible or holdall construction. The soft sided constructions are provided with wire frame stiffeners 6, 8, 9, 17 releasable corner stiffeners and a releasable back stiffener, and an external pouch (20).

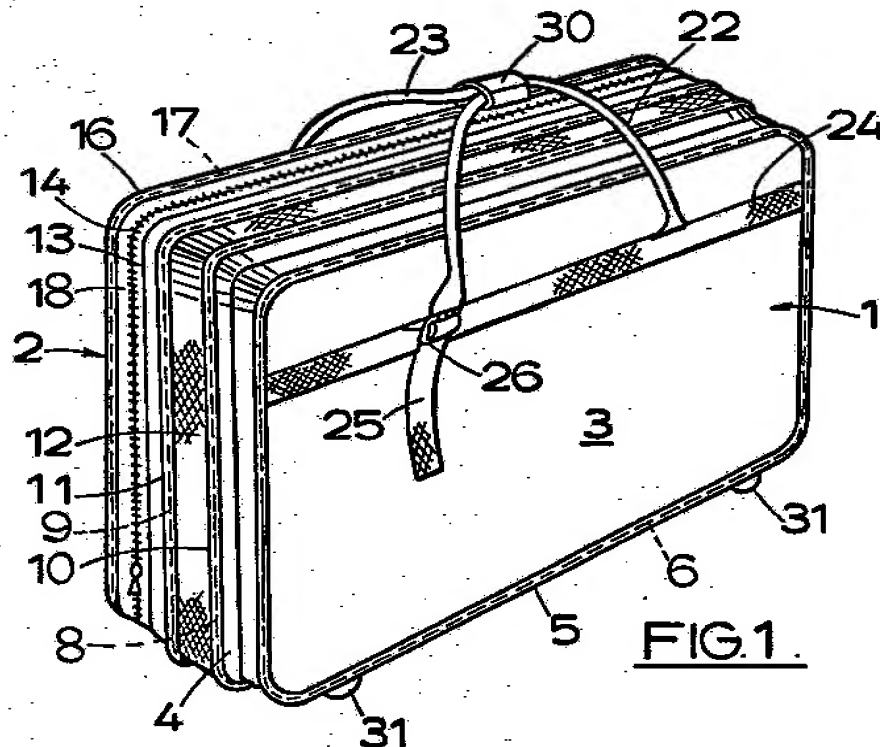


FIG. 1.

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IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO LUGGAGE CASES

This invention relates to luggage cases of the kind fitted with wheels or rollers so that they can be drawn along on the ground instead of being carried.

Such cases are known which have wheels or rollers at one end of the case to run on the ground whilst the other end of the case is lifted clear of the ground by a person holding the normal carrying handle of the case, or an auxiliary handle at a front corner of the case. It is also known to provide such cases with four wheels or rollers to run on the ground and a lead type attachment at a front corner of the case to enable a person to tow the case along behind him.

According to the present invention a luggage case is provided having wheels or rollers on which it can run along the ground and a carrying handle or handles of adjustable length by which the case can be carried or drawn along on the wheels or rollers.

By adjustment of the length of the handle or handles the height at which the handle or handles can be held above the ground can be altered to suit the height of the user, so that he can hold the handle or handles at a comfortable height to draw the case along the ground, and yet he can also lift the case clear of the ground and carry it satisfactorily.

For ease of manoeuvring the case along the ground it preferably has caster wheels or rollers.

There may be provision for adjustment of the length of the or each handle within its own length, or the or each handle may be adjustable at its attachment

to the case for varying its effective length. In a preferred embodiment a pair of flexible handles is provided centrally of the front of the case, and each handle has an adjustable attachment at the case for independently varying its length.

The case may be of a rigid or substantially rigid construction comprising a body and lid, or it may be of a collapsible construction made largely from soft materials. In the latter construction wire frame members may be included to help support the soft sheet materials, such as a textile fabric or sheet plastics materials, in the required shape of the case for use. Again the case may have body and lid parts or it may be more in the form of a hold-all. In the collapsible form the case can be made with a substantial saving in weight, which is an advantage when the case is to be transported by air, but nevertheless it can be of hard wearing materials which will resist damage during use by rough handling and other causes.

An embodiment of the invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view from above of a luggage case in accordance with the present invention, and

Figure 2 is a side view of the case.

In this embodiment the luggage case is of a collapsible construction made largely from soft synthetic, for example a hard-wearing nylon, fabric materials. It is of a large generally rectangular box

shape with well-rounded corners comprising a body 1 and a lid 2.

The body has a bottom wall panel 3, Figure 1, and a bellows-like circumferential wall 4 of the soft material. The circumferential wall 4, which defines the mouth of the body is secured to the periphery of the bottom wall panel 3 by stitching which also secures piping 5 between them which extends around the periphery of the panel externally of the body. A rectangular frame 6, Figure 1, of stiff steel wire is contained in the piping 5 as stiffening for the body. Further stiffening is afforded by two additional, parallel, rectangular frames 8, 9, also of stiff steel wire, contained in piping 10, 11 respectively secured around an intermediate part of the circumferential wall 4 at either side of a reinforcing medial band of webbing 12. A first stringer 13 of a zip fastener 14, which may be lockable, is secured by stitching to the circumferential wall around the mouth. Between the bottom wall panel 3 and the medial webbing band 12, and between the webbing band and the mouth the circumferential wall is pleated to encourage it to fold inwardly when it is collapsed in bellows fashion.

The lid 2 has a top wall panel 15 around which piping 16 is stitched which contains another rectangular frame 17, Figure 2, of stiff steel wire. A second stringer 18 of the zip fastener 14 is stitched to the top wall panel 15 and piping 16. The body 1 and lid 2 are permanently attached together, hingedly, at the back portion of the circumferential wall 4 of the body by a joining piece 19 of the soft material. The zip fastener 14 extends around the two ends and front edges of the body and lid to hold the lid closed over the mouth of the body.

A large pouch 20 of the soft material is provided on the outside of the lid 1, which extends for the length of the lid and from the back edge of the lid for approximately three-quarters of the way towards the front edge of the lid. A zip fastener 21 closes the pouch 20 adjacent the front edge of the lid.

Two flexible handles 22, 23 are fastened one to the body 1 and one to the lid 2. Both handles 22, 23 are made from strips of webbing which for a major part of their lengths are rolled over and stitched into a tubular form. The handle 22 at the body is attached to the bottom wall panel 3 at a reinforcing webbing band 24 extending along the panel near to but spaced from the front portion of the circumferential wall 4 of the body. One end of the handle 22 is permanently secured to the webbing band 24 whilst the other end portion 25 of the handle, which is left unfolded for an appreciable length, is adjustably attached to the webbing band by a tongue-less buckle fastening 26 to enable the effective length of the handle to be varied. The handle 23 of the lid is similarly attached to the pouch 20 at a reinforcing webbing band 27 extending adjacent the zip fastener fastener 21. It has one permanently secured end and one end portion 28 adjustably attached to the webbing band 27 by a tongue-less buckle fastening 29 for varying the effective length of the handle. The adjustable end portions of the two handles are remote from one another. A detachable grip 30 is fitted to the handles to hold them together. The grip 30 can be removed, or at least disconnected from one of the handles, to allow the handles to be separated for the case to be opened. It can re-positioned to suit adjusted lengths of the handles.

Secured to the bottom wall portion 3 of the circumferential wall 4 of the body 1 are four caster wheels 31, two near each end of that wall portion. Reinforcement, not shown, is provided at the bottom wall portion to give sturdy support for the caster wheels 31 so that they in turn can provide firm support to the case.

A flat back-stiffener, not shown, for example of fibre-board, is releasably located, as by press fastenings, against the inside surface of the bottom wall portion 3 and occupies substantially the whole of the area of that wall portion. To enable the case to be collapsed the back-stiffener can be released from its position against the bottom wall portion 3 and folded instead to lie flat against the back wall panel.

Stiffeners, not shown, are releasably located in retaining pockets located inside the case at its front corners. The stiffeners are shaped to follow the contours of the corner and may be made of stiff board, metal or a suitable plastics material. To enable the case to be collapsed the stiffeners can be removed from their pockets.

For use the handles 22, 23 are adjusted to a length to suit the user of the case so that, holding the handles, he can run the case along the ground on the caster wheels, and yet also pick the case up to carry it whenever necessary, with the least degree of awkwardness.

When the case is not required to be used it can be collapsed, into a compact state in which the reinforcing frames 6,8,9,17 lie close together.

CLAIMS

- 5 1. A luggage case having wheels or rollers on which it can run along the ground and a carrying handle, or handles, of adjustable length by which the case can be carried or drawn along on the wheels or rollers.
- 10 2. A luggage case according to claim 1 wherein the case is provided with castor wheels.
- 15 3. A luggage case according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the or each handle has provision within its own length for adjustment of its length.
- 20 4. A luggage case according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the or each handle has an attachment to the case to vary its effective length.
- 25 5. A luggage case according to claim 4 wherein the or each handle is permanently attached at one end to the case and has the adjustable attachment to the case at the end of the handle remote from the permanent attachment.
- 30 6. A luggage case according to claim 4 or claim 5 wherein the adjustable attachment of the or each handle is provided by engagement of the handle with a tongueless buckle attached to the case.
- 35 7. A luggage case according to any previous claim wherein the or each handle is attached to the case at a webbing band fixed on a wall of the case.
8. A luggage case according to any preceding claim wherein there is more than one handles and a detachable

grip is provided that is releasably fastened to the handles to hold them together.

5 9. A luggage case according to any preceding claim constructed substantially of soft materials.

10. A luggage case according to claim 9 wherein wire frame members support the soft material.

10 11. A luggage case according to claim 10 wherein the wire frame members are contained in piping extending circumferentially of walls of the case.

15 12. A luggage case according to any preceding claim wherein the case is of collapsible construction.

20 13. A luggage case according to claim 12 having a circumferential wall which is pleated to encourage the wall to fold inwardly when the case is collapsed.

14. A luggage case according to claim 13 wherein a flat back-stiffener is releasably located against an inside portion of the circumferential wall.

25 15. A luggage case according to any of claims 12 to 14 wherein stiffeners are releasably engaged in internal retaining pockets at corners of the case.

30 16. A luggage case according to any preceding claim wherein an external pouch of soft material is provided on a wall of the case.

35 17. A luggage case substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.